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## SUCCESS STORY

### Philippines Begins Attack On Garbage



Toledo city officials characterize local garbage, one step in a new environmental program

#### Challenge

Issues of solid waste management in the Philippines involve small family industries as well as just garbage. Families augment their income by scavenging in the city dump. Usually mothers and often children will rotate days with other mothers and children, wading into the mountains of waste to collect marketable refuse, then weighing it with the dump manager, and taking home the meager earnings. As the Philippines population grows so does the amount of solid waste which has become an environmental hazard, with as much as 50 percent finding its way into the ocean. A program was needed to address environmental as well as social concerns of solid waste building up for decades.

#### Initiative

The Philippine Environmental Governance (EcoGov) Program uses funding from USAID to stimulate local government planning for solid waste as well as to improve management of coastal waters and forestland.

With initial focus on specific pilot areas, a multi-step process has been developed for assessing, planning, procuring, disposing of and managing garbage in Toledo City and Danao City.

USAID involvement has allowed for training and orientation throughout the process. The EcoGov Program fosters good governance, stressing transparency and accountability of national and local leaders, and participatory decision-making.

#### Results

Toledo City has completed the first three steps of the program, establishing and training a waste management board and technical working group, and conducting a survey of local waste management practices. City officials, working under a bridge along the river, characterized their garbage, discussing possible management ideas for each of the different types of garbage identified.

Cayetano Yray, Danao City's environmental management specialist, is enthusiastic. He's observed how composting is being done in other communities and is happy that expensive landfills aren't Danao's only solution. "We felt overwhelmed before; we didn't know how. Now that we've seen the finished project we know we can do it," he says.